2135

Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

Vol. XII. — No. 3. **NEW YORK, N. Y., JUNE 13, 1896.** **Whole No. 341.**

"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."
JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The passage of the anti-immigration bill by the house marks a new departure in American legislation. It is certain that ten years ago so ignorant, absurd, and ridiculous a test as the educational one would not have stood the slightest chance of becoming law. The stupidity of our legislators could not better be illustrated. They profess to be anxious to keep out the criminal and vicious, and jump at the conclusion that illiteracy necessarily argues criminality. This is not true even in countries where popular education is general, as daily occurrences, to say nothing of *a priori* reasoning, make plain; but what inference can be made from the fact of illiteracy in a country where there are few public schools and no opportunities for acquiring "education"? The reasoning of the "scholars in politics," like Henry Cabot Lodge, and the majority of the newspapers, would disgrace a school-boy. The probabilities are that the illiteracy test will keep out thousands of honest and hard-working people, and place no barrier in the way of any respectable number of the criminal and vicious. With some the advocacy of the educational test is pure hypocrisy. They want to suspend immigration altogether, for a time or permanently, and lack the manliness to say so. General Walker, in the "Atlantic," thinks the country needs a rest from the process of assimilating degraded new-comers, and advocates measures really calculated to accomplish the end in view. His propositions can be discussed seriously. But this educational test is such a piece of idiocy or humbug that patient treatment of it is next to impossible. It is gratifying to see that about half a dozen newspapers in the country perceive the folly of the proposed course.

What a clamor and gnashing of teeth has been caused by that innocent Butler anti-bond bill! All the "sound money" patriots and champions of "national honesty" are up in arms, denouncing the senate majority as traitors, Anarchists, and flat repudiationists for threatening to pass a bill providing that no bonds shall be issued hereafter without the consent of congress. Such a restriction of the power of the executive, they shriek, means bankruptcy, silver, and ruin, for the senate would never give its sanction to an issue of bonds, and would force the secretary of the treasury to pay in silver. The logic of these patriots is somewhat queer. Are they prepared to take the position that the president alone stands between the country and bankruptcy, and that congress is not to be trusted? If so, why leave congress any important powers at all? Why not deprive it of all legislative authority, or abolish it altogether? If it is not to be trusted to save the country from "absolute ruin," can it be trusted to deal with matters in which the evils of corruption are less direct and fatal? Congress makes all the laws relating to banking, currency, trade, and yet the patriots have not proposed to deprive it of this power, although it is perfectly clear that, if congress passes certain legislation with the view to prevent bond issues, and the president disregards its design and issues such bonds, the whole work of congress is set at naught. To say that congress may control currency and banking and revenue, but that it will never do to give it the right to regulate the contraction of debts, is to strain at a gnat after swallowing a caravan of camels. Suppose congress should become a silver body; would the "sound money" patriots advise its abolition and the investing of the president with legislative powers?

Lest some one may infer from a paragraph in Mr. Robinson's review of Mr. Tandy's book that Mr. Tandy has dodged the standard-of-value question, I hasten to point out that such is not the case. Throughout his chapter on money Mr. Tandy clearly assumes the necessity of a standard of value, and places himself on record as against those who claim that such a standard is impossible. It is true that he does not attempt to determine what commodity or combination of commodities is best fitted to serve as a standard, but to his mind and to mine that is a comparatively unimportant question,—being a question, not of financial principle, but of banking practice. It is because Mr. Robinson represents Mr. Tandy as "avoiding the *important* question of a money-standard" that I venture to emphasize the matter, for this way of phrasing it is liable to be misunderstood. The closing paragraph of Mr. Robinson's review suggests to me the further thought that here he takes square issue with one of the central ideas of the book, and appears to be unconscious that he does so. The motto on Mr. Tandy's title-page (taken from an article written by me) is: "Equality if we can get it, but liberty at any rate." Mr. Robinson, after properly suggesting that the book would have been improved by a demonstration of the tendency of liberty to produce equality, leads us, in his last paragraph, to believe that he would accept the opposite motto: "Liberty if we can get it, but equality at any rate." Certainly, to tell us that he wants liberty only for the purpose of securing equality is equivalent to telling us that, should he find that liberty will not lead to equality, while authority will, he would then be ready to accept authority. Now, the only meaning that I can discover here is that Mr. Robinson, if confronted with the alternative, is willing to be a slave in order to procure material comfort,—is willing to sacrifice equality of (contract) rights to equality of conditions. It clears up this matter wonderfully to remember that liberty is nothing but a form of equality,—the equality of rights. I believe that equality of rights is the road to approximate equality of conditions, and that this is to-day the most potent argument in behalf of liberty, or equality of rights; but, if I ever have to choose between these two forms of equality, I shall certainly cling to equality of rights, except in the very extreme case when inequality of conditions is so great as to land me at starvation's door. Does Mr. Robinson [illegible] to say that he would rather be prohibited [illegible] baking his own bread (using this as a symbol of all the prohibitions) if thereby he could be assured a whole loaf, than to live on half a loaf and enjoy the freedom to bake for himself? To my mind there is no greater enjoyment than that of being one's own master.

I am in receipt of an encouraging letter from England. The writer, hitherto unknown to me, has been reading "Instead of a Book," which has so interested him that he desires to subscribe to Liberty and to secure other subscribers in his vicinity. His letter contains the following passage: "I have until recently ardently advocated the doctrines of Individualism, after Donisthorpe, but I must confess your work has considerably shaken my faith. I am anxious to thoroughly understand 'Mutual Banking.' I have always preached free money, but mutual banking I knew only from the writings of J. Armsden, and I couldn't exactly make out what he is driving at. Your 'Instead of a Book' has, however, thrown a flood of light over the complex mechanism of the currency, and now a more complete study is what I require." I think that my correspondent, after reading "Mutual Banking" and "Involuntary Idleness," will see more in Mr. Armsden's writings than he saw before. And I would also say to him that to be converted to the teachings of Liberty involves less a departure from Donisthorpe than he supposes; for Mr. Donisthorpe, in reality, is much more advanced than his books indicate. Mr. Donisthorpe publishes his books so long after writing them that the author lags behind the man.

Liberty.

Issued Fortnightly at Two Dollars a Year; Single Copies, Eight Cents.

BENJ. R. TUCKER, EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

Office of Publication, 24 Gold Street.
Post Office Address: LIBERTY, P. O. Box No. 1312, New York, N. Y.

Entered at New York as Second-Class Mail Matter.

NEW YORK, N. Y., JUNE 13, 1896.

"In abolishing rent and interest, the last vestiges of old-time slavery, the Revolution abolishes at one stroke the sword of the executioner, the seal of the magistrate, the club of the policeman, the gauge of the exciseman, the erasing-knife of the department clerk, all those insignia of Politics, which young Liberty grinds beneath her heel." — PROUDHON.

☞ The appearance in the editorial column of articles over other signatures than the editor's initial indicates that the editor approves their central purpose and general tenor, though he does not hold himself responsible for every phrase or word. But the appearance in other parts of the paper of articles by the same or other writers by no means indicates that he disapproves them in any respect, such disposition of them being governed largely by motives of convenience.

Mr. Salter's Defence.

III.

I have, it seems, misinterpreted Mr. Salter's remark that "no line of *principle* can be drawn as to how far a society may go." By principle he did not mean *ethical* principle, but a fixed dividing line. It gives me pleasure to note this important correction. Mr. Salter's italics misled me. I am glad to know that he is prepared to admit that society *can* do wrong in two distinct ways at least,—either through ignorance of scientific truth in relation to the conditions of social welfare or by deliberately offending against justice and equality. Now, if social action were unanimous action of all the members of society, it is evident that it could never be wrong in the second sense. But, since by social action Mr. Salter means majority action, it is evident that society *can* be wrong in that sense. If the majority should abolish Anarchy in religion and political discussion, Mr. Salter would condemn it, whether its action were due to ignorance or conscious tyranny. Yet he would insist on calling it "social" action,—the action of society!

As I have already dealt with this question at considerable length, no more needs to be said concerning it. As for the contention that no fixed dividing line can be drawn as to how far a majority may go, it follows from the principles I have laid down that the majority has no greater rights than the minority or than a single individual. Equal freedom is as binding upon governments and majorities as upon individuals, and involves the abolition of all invasive governmental institutions. It is useless to quote John Stuart Mill on the subject of government. He is obsolete, "overruled." Mr. Salter might as well quote Aristotle and Plato. Mill was refuted in "Social Statics" many years ago. The claim of the advanced individualists, and especially of the Anarchists, is that the Kant-Spencer principle of equal freedom covers the entire ground, and defines the sphere of individual action. The claim of any number of individuals to override equal freedom in the name of metaphysical abstractions and fictions is not recognized. The present-day defenders of governments must address themselves to the argument from equal freedom, and attempt to discredit that generalization; any other argument is a waste of energy.

Mr. Salter demurs to my reference to him as a governmentalist. It is true that Mr. Salter is perfectly willing to consider "each case on its merits" and to withhold everything from government which private enterprise is fitted to do successfully. I am not aware that there is any school which would not subscribe to the same view in the abstract. The trouble is that the same majority which is alleged to have the *right* to interfere and crowd out private enterprise is made the judge of the facts regarding the fitness and success of private enterprise. It is not his idea of what a government can successfully undertake that makes a man a governmentalist; it is his idea of what it *may*, rightfully, do. Mr. Salter is a governmentalist because he rejects equal freedom and asserts the right of the majority to coerce the non-invasive for any purposes it deems necessary and proper.

We come now to Mr. Salter's practical considerations. Having asserted the right of society—of the majority and its government—to interfere in protecting life and property against invaders, in regulating production and exchange, etc., he proceeds to inquire whether it is advisable for government to interfere. With reference to protection, Mr. Salter says that, judging from facts of the past (I trust Mr. Salter will answer Mr. Byington's query as to what particular facts he has in mind), Anarchy would work badly. He adds:

> Mr. Yarros says "there is nothing absurd in demanding that protection of life and liberty shall be left to voluntary social action"—surely there is; the only question is whether, when it is so left, all the members of a society get it. If they do, anarchy is vastly better and simpler than government; but the general experience has been that, when such protection has been left to voluntary action, only a few get it

Why shouldn't all the members get it, if they are perfectly free to organize themselves into defensive associations? In view of the marvelous achievements of private enterprise (among which may be mentioned railroads; telegraphs; telephones; postal improvements; electric progress generally; the press; the credit system; benevolent, scientific, literary, and educational societies; detective agencies; insurance; trade unions; etc.), it is rather odd to hear doubts expressed as to the ability of private enterprise to protect life and property. Do we depend on the government for our food, clothes, shelter, information, and recreation? How absurd it is to maintain that private enterprise cannot give us protection against criminals! What can be more wasteful, inefficient, and unintelligent than the management of the police system by government? As for the courts, the ablest lawyers freely express the opinion that more is lost than gained by applying to them. Boards of trade have their own courts of arbitration and boycott the courts. What with routine, red tape, empty form, delay, stupidity, and blind devotion to precedent, justice is a very rare thing indeed in the courts.

That Anarchy would not work well in the industrial realm Mr. Salter is led to believe by observing contemporary life and the results of the present struggle for existence. He says that Anarchy already exists to a considerable extent in industrial relations, and that it has been found wanting where it has been tried. This is in response to my reminder that there is plenty of restrictive legislation in the industrial realm, and that existing conditions afford no test of Anarchy.

Now, in the first place, such liberty as exists in the industrial realm has proved of the greatest value to the workmen. Whatever sins capitalism has to answer for, it is not to be denied that the lot of the masses is steadily improving. The standard of living is higher; wages are rising; hours of labor are decreasing. The poor are not growing poorer, although the rich are growing richer at their expense. Even imperfect liberty has done much for the "lower classes." But it has not done all that justice requires, and the question is whether regulation and interference would have done more, and whether we must abandon liberty now and resort to these in order to secure to the workmen all they are entitled to under justice. We assert and attempt to prove that the remedies for the evils borne by labor are to be found in greater and fuller liberty, in the removal of those *fundamental* restrictions which place labor at an enormous disadvantage in the struggle with capital. And it is at this point that Mr. Salter utterly fails to grasp the real import of the economic position of Anarchism. It is idle to talk about the *number* of freedoms enjoyed by the laborer, and the *number* of freedoms denied to him. Everything depends on the kind rather than the amount of the restrictions imposed on him. *If* the liberties denied to him are so essential and fundamental that, in their absence, those liberties which are accorded him can do but little good, it is manifestly absurd to say that, since the liberties which he has have not done much for him, little can be expected from the others now demanded in his behalf. It is this "if" which Mr. Salter must consider. I have contended that the liberties withheld are far more important and fundamental than those granted, and that the results obtained under the imperfect *régime* are no test *at all* of the powers and benefits of perfect liberty. Whether I am right or wrong can be determined only in the light of economic science, because the point involved is an economic one.

What liberties does the laborer enjoy? To move from place to place, to organize, to contract in the open (but not free) market, to strike, etc. These things were all denied him not very long ago, historically speaking, but now they are conceded. These liberties are not unimportant, but they are not fundamental. What, on the other hand, are the liberties denied to him and all others in the industrial sphere? The liberty to use natural media in accordance with the principle of justice; the liberty to exchange products and organize credit; the liberty to utter currency representing all suitable commodities; the liberty to trade with foreigners, etc. The abolition of monopoly in these things would enable the laborer to command equitable terms and dispense with all governmental "protection" and regulation designed for his special benefit.

Mr. Salter, indeed, doubts this. He is inclined to think that "the evils of Anarchy" [not of Anarchy, Mr. Salter, but of monopoly, of invasion] are derivable, not from governmentalism, but from causes deeper-seated than artificial arrangements, such as natural inequality. This is not the place to discuss economic problems in detail. My object was, and is, to show that Mr. Salter was wrong in alleging that Anarchy had failed to produce order and equity in industrial relations, and it is sufficient for this purpose to point to the monopolies of land, credit, banking, and trade, and to throw the burden of proof upon Mr. Salter. It is significant that in his reply he does not even allude to land and currency, and speaks only of protective tariffs as undoubted survivals of governmentalism in the industrial realm. I repeat, therefore, that Anarchy in industry means, first of all, free trade in capital and credit and an equitable system of land tenure. As long as these are lacking, the other liberties can produce extremely limited results.

Whether, if we had complete industrial liberty, natural inequalities as to intellect and character and skill would breed evils calling for intervention is a question into which I do not propose to enter here, beyond making the general assertion that mere natural differences in ability and skill have never been proved to be prolific sources of social evil. Monopoly, legal privilege, and legal inequalities have always and everywhere been the instruments whereby the few have exploited the many. It has never been shown that poverty, misery, and involuntary idleness have been caused by inequalities of income due to inequalities of ability. The problem is whether, if true industrial liberty existed, involving, as it does, access to natural media, an abundant and stable currency, and freedom of trade, poverty and involuntary idleness—not inequality of rewards—would continue to exist. If not, the "labor problem" would be solved, although absolute equality might not exist.

One thing is certain: industrial liberty would not produce any *injustice*. Here, again, we are face to face with the difficulty of agreeing as to the meaning and definition of justice. Mr. Salter admits that he failed to give a definition of justice in his book, while in his article no attempt is made to supply the omission. He does not even tell us whether the definition which I imputed to him correctly represents his ideas. If, as he admits, it is not unjust for a man who does more work in a given time to get more pay, it is plain that natural inequality cannot produce unjust results in his opinion any more than in mine. Yet, if justice is not equality, what becomes of the alleged duty on the part of brain to serve brawn, instead of buying it at the cheapest rate? It is not unjust for those who have organizing genius to use it for themselves, for they are simply profiting by natural superiority, and take nothing from the inferior. It is certainly a piece of question-begging for Mr. Salter to assert that the inferior are forced by conditions to accept the terms of the superior as the alternative to starvation and death, for the contention is that, in the absence of monopoly and invasion, the superior would be forced, by the law of supply and demand, to offer equitable terms, and that the inferior would be in a position to decline anything less than the full reward of their labor, the entire value of their contribution to the product. The position of the superior and inferior alike would be vastly changed under a condition of complete industrial liberty.

As for my own conception of justice, it is true that I contented myself with affirmation and definition, and gave no argument. It was no part of my task to prove my conception of justice. It is the Spencerian conception, and Mr. Salter can find a comprehensive treatment of the subject in "Justice" and other Spencerian works. I accept the Spencerian view of justice without qualification, and I supposed that Mr. Salter was familiar with it. It seems, however, that he is not, and a few words may be profitably added.

Yes, equal freedom *is* synonymous with justice, but industrial freedom alone is not identical with justice, because there are other spheres in which equal freedom is equally essential. We might have equal freedom in industry, and invasion in social, religious, and domestic relations. It was with this thought in mind that I observed that true liberty in the industrial realm would necessarily result in *economic* justice, meaning thereby that anything occurring in the industrial realm under equal freedom would necessarily be just, because justice—equal freedom in all things—demands nothing in industry but equal freedom.

Mr. Salter, however, thinks my definition of justice far from satisfactory. He declares that he can imagine two men perfectly free, yet one of them, because of a peculiar situation, able to strike an unjust bargain with the other. The trouble is that Mr. Salter again uses the word justice loosely and tries to prove that my definition is imperfect by rejecting it! It follows as an obvious corollary from my definition of justice that bargains struck under a condition of equal freedom are necessarily just. This, however, does not mean that they are necessarily always humane and generous. Under ordinary, normal conditions justice doubtless coincides with the demand of the higher sentiments, but under exceptional circumstances a perfectly just act may be ungenerous and even revolting. Mr. Salter should distinguish between justice and beneficence. Just contracts may involve serious hardships, but it is always safer to follow the general principle and enforce them, if such enforcement is not voluntarily waived.

But would you enforce the contract between the drowning man and his heartless rescuer? Mr. Salter will ask. In all probability not, for such a contract could hardly be a just one. True, the rescuer does not use any force, nor is he responsible for the accident, but there are other circumstances which vitiate contracts. Thus the promissor must be sane and in full possession of his faculties,—fit mentally to enter into a contract. It will hardly be contended that a drowning man is fit to make a contract. He is not in a position to deliberate and haggle and balance advantages and disadvantages. Usually he is frantic, desperate, "emotionally insane," and utterly incapable of reflection. That, at least, would be the verdict of any intelligent jury, and such a contract as Mr. Salter supposes would not be enforced.

Mr. Salter avers that much of what is going on in the industrial world to-day is on a par with his extreme illustration. This is hardly accurate, but, even if it should be admitted, nothing more would follow than that under the denials of important industrial liberties men are forced to make unjust contracts. That is precisely what Anarchists assert. Because equal freedom does not exist in the industrial sphere, no contract is really just. There is always force, invasion, artificial inequality behind it. But, if equal freedom prevailed, cases of hardship would be extremely rare, and they would result from accident and misfortune,—things that have nothing to do with the question of justice between man and man. Equality of opportunity and equality of liberty being given, the free play of supply and demand would result in fair and equitable bargains.

In his concluding paragraph Mr. Salter charges that I have some confusion about his use of the social organism. This I venture to meet by a general and emphatic denial. Mr. Salter, it is true, has attempted to give us his definition of society, and it is a definition which all Anarchists and Spencerians unhesitatingly accept. But, when he asserts that society has rights and duties of its own, and that the Spencerian conception of the social organism is "imperfect," because Spencer denies the ethical right of the majority to govern the minority, he implicitly advances a different and peculiar definition of society.

Mr. Salter does not detect any inconsistency between the argument from the social organism and the admission that all our prepossessions are in favor of non-interference. But *why* is liberty always a good in itself, and restraint always an evil in itself? Why, if society is an organism and has the *right* to interfere, should an attempt at interference provoke resentment and require special justification? It ought, I repeat, to appear to every member of society as the most natural thing in the world for society to discharge its duty and enforce its right. If it does not, it can only be because of the general and profound feeling that any interference not necessitated by actual aggression is impertinent and wrong. If this feeling were reinforced by clear ideas of the nature of aggression, we should have a *régime* of equal freedom; in the absence of such ideas we have a thousand and one governmental invasions that affect society disastrously, but there remains the significant fact that men will not submit to restraint unless its urgency is clearly shown to them.

There were a number of minor criticisms in my review with which Mr. Salter has not dealt, but it is not necessary to bring them up again. The main points at issue have now been covered. I conclude by thanking Mr. Salter for his fairness and courtesy as well as for his generous personal references. V. Y.

P. S.—In my discussion with Mr. Salter I have naturally reasoned from the premises or postulates of evolutionary ethics, which I accept without reservation. Mr. Tucker's ethical views are radically different from mine, and, when he says that my ethics are in my way, he implies that no successful answer to Mr. Salter's criticisms upon Anarchism can be made except from the egoistic point of view. I cannot reconcile egoistic doctrines and terminology with Darwinian and Spencerian bio-

logy, and must continue to defend my political philosophy with such weapons as my ethics enable me to wield. If it is possible to make a different and stronger answer to Mr. Salter from the same point of view as mine, I should like to see the attempt made. Mr. Salter doubtless realizes that I do not represent egoism, and that Mr. Tucker's method of meeting his objections would be essentially dissimilar to mine in some respects. To undertake to deal with the charge of inconsistency which Mr. Tucker has brought against me would involve a reopening of our old ethical controversy,—something which I deem inopportune at present. It was Mr. Tucker who requested me to review Mr. Salter's book, and, if there has been any "trouble," he knows that I could not have averted it. Our coöperation is rendered possible by our agreement to work for the same object in different ways. We are doing very well, indeed, I think, in view of the fundamental character of our differences.

Mr. Yarros and I.

I agree with Mr. Yarros that he and I coöperate famously, considering that we disagree so vitally. I go further, and say that the success of this coöperation is due in a much greater degree to his own forbearance than to any of which I can boast. But Mr. Yarros is well aware that his position admits forbearance where mine does not. He is responsible only for his own utterances; I am responsible for the editorial columns of Liberty, which contain his utterances and mine. Consequently he does not feel it necessary to correct me, even though he thinks me in the wrong; whereas I am compelled to correct him whenever circumstances make it necessary to admit to the editorial columns the errors which he sometimes intermingles with his truths. If I should not do so, the unity of Liberty's teaching would be impaired. And I am sure that no man more decidedly approves me in this course than does Mr. Yarros, for he is not one of those flabby persons who believe that an editorial policy gains in force by inconsistency. In fact, I may here supplement his information to the public that it was at my suggestion that he reviewed Mr. Salter's book with the further information that it was at his suggestion that I printed my disclaimer regarding those portions of his answer to Mr. Salter with which I could not agree. In entering this disclaimer I by no means implied that Mr. Yarros's answer to Mr. Salter is a failure as a whole. I consider it eminently successful at many points,—yes, at most points; it fails only at the two or three points where, as I have said, Mr. Yarros's so-called "evolutionary ethics" get in his way.

One of these instances of failure is to be found in the present issue, in the manner in which Mr. Yarros deals with Mr. Salter's problem of the drowning man who accepts ruinously harsh terms in order to have his life saved. Those terrible ethics which have subjugated Mr. Yarros compel his adherence to the position that justice is always expedient. Now, his common sense tells him that it would be clearly inexpedient to enforce this drowning man's contract. So he is under the necessity of showing either that the contract is unjust, or else that there is no real contract. But he has already declared that a contract made under conditions of equal freedom is necessarily just, and, as the conditions in this hypothetical case are precisely those of equal freedom, he is obliged to resort to the extremely weak plea that the drowning man's voluntarily-given consent is not a contract, because a drowning man is emotionally insane, and therefore not one of those sovereign individuals who alone can make a contract.

Certainly the sanity of the drowning man is to be tested solely by his conduct. Now, will Mr. Yarros claim for a moment that the drowning man's decision, for instance, to give up all his property in order to save his life is an insane decision? Will he claim that the sane course is to refuse the rescuer's terms, and drown in consequence? Such a claim would go farther, in any court, to establish Mr. Yarros's insanity than that of the drowning man. Will Mr. Yarros declare that a sane man, having hours of time for reflection and deliberation and haggling, but confronted nevertheless by an alternative as absolute and as serious as that which confronts the drowning man, would finally adopt any other course than that which the drowning man is supposed to adopt? Surely not. Yet, unless he so declares, Mr. Salter, with his drowning man, has him on the hip, and his ethics are found wanting.

The true answer to Mr. Salter is that there is no obligation upon outsiders to enforce any contract, even though it be just, and that, when individuals associate themselves for defensive purposes, they will decide at the start what classes of just contracts it is advisable to enforce. And men who are not afflicted with "evolutionary ethics," and who know that there are occasions when justice is not the supreme consideration, will decline to enforce the just contract of the drowning man.*

In exposing such an error as that into which Mr. Yarros here falls, my purpose is not to chide him, or to reopen our ethical controversy, or to depreciate the invaluable coöperation which he gives me, but simply to protect myself as a teacher of rational politics. T.

A Great Chance Lost.

The news has just reached me of the death of Mr. Herman Royer of San Francisco, although it occurred as long ago as last December. For ten years or more Mr. Royer had been a reader and strong supporter of Liberty. One of the early converts of Henry George to the Single Tax philosophy, he was slowly but surely rid of it, after a long mental struggle, by a close study of Liberty's teachings. When I met him for the first and only time,—in 1887, I think, when he was at the east on business,—he was still a Single Taxer, defending his view with all the keenness of a strong intellect and all the persistence of an extraordinarily severe and determined nature. He was not a man easily to be turned, and it was a long time after his departure from the east before Anarchy finally won him. Tall, straight, and unbending physically, his mental make-up was in harmony with his exterior. He seemed a man of iron. Yet to those who knew him best there were great depths of feeling beneath his stern exterior. In San Francisco his was a marked individuality. He was a well-known and moderately well-to-do inventor and manufacturer, and was honored for his high integrity and delicate scruple by all who had dealings with him. And he did not conceal his opinions. Wherever he went he made the cause of Anarchism felt and respected, and, though not an open-handed man, he did not a little in the distribution of Anarchistic literature. Even under ordinary circumstances the loss of such a man to the cause we should have to deeply deplore.

But the startling fact that I am now to disclose regarding the man whose untimely taking-off is here chronicled may well make one ponder sadly over the ironies of fate. Neither a father or a husband, Mr. Royer had no immediate family. His nearest relative is a millionaire brother. The estate which he leaves is estimated at forty or fifty thousand dollars, exclusive of legal judgments which he had secured in his favor that may double or treble its value. Sixteen years ago he made a will. At that time a German Freethinker of the Karl Heinzen school, and, as such, believing the study of political and social questions to be useful, though (so far as I know) having then no pronounced economic convictions, he bequeathed his entire property, with the exception of two or three thousand dollars allotted to distant relatives in Germany (since deceased), to the University of the State of California for the foundation of a chair of political economy. At the time of his sudden death from heart failure last December, this will was found, and now stands as his last testament. *But I am informed by his two most intimate friends and Anarchistic comrades, Mr. Thomas F. Hagerty, an inventor of high repute, and Mr. George Cumming, president of the San Francisco Mechanics' Institute, that they know, from earnest conversations held with Mr. Royer during the months preceding his death, that it was his serious and settled intention to destroy the will of sixteen years ago, and to substitute for it another bequeathing his entire property to me for the propagation of Anarchism.* And now, instead, through his careless procrastination, prompted perhaps by confidence in his health, that property goes to the State of California, an institution in which Mr. Royer had lost all belief, to be expended in the teaching of ideas precisely contrary to those which he held, the will being executed by men who were his friends when he appointed them his executors, but whose friendship he had lost because of his radical opinions!

Think of it, my friends and comrades! The income from this property would have insured the propagation of Anarchism steadily and successfully, and now this opportunity is lost forever. It is a fact discouraging to contemplate. When Charles O'Conor, the conceded head of the American bar and one of the earliest of Liberty's subscribers, died a bachelor and left his millions to comparatively distant relatives not in sympathy with his cherished views, I could only wonder and regret, especially when I learned later that the works of

* I am reminded here of an incident that occurred at a little dinner given to Mr. Yarros by two or three friends on the eve of his departure from New York for Chicago. Mr. Yarros rarely lets fifteen minutes pass without a mention of ethics, and at this dinner the word dropped from his lips before we were through with the fish. "Say, Yarros," exclaimed one of his intimates, "you needn't pack that word; don't burden yourself with it; just leave that behind." The laugh went round the table, but the sensible advice was unheeded. The word went to Chicago all the same.

Proudhon, Liberty, and other publications of mine were favorites in his library, which he required his secretary to read aloud to him by the hour as he paced up and down the rooms of his Nantucket residence. I have been able to explain this only by the spirit of pessimism which perhaps characterized the veteran in his declining years, after witnessing the disinclination of others to see the truth which he had so long taught. But tenfold more disheartening than Mr. O'Conor's course, almost sickening in fact, is this accident that has now occurred, in which the best intentions have been thwarted by the reckless imprudence of a man who, in all other matters, was the personification of method and precision.

I make this fact public chiefly as a warning to others. Liberty has other earnest friends who are among the more fortunate in this world, and some of these may harbor intentions of endowing the cause of Anarchism. If so, I urge them to profit by Mr. Royer's mistake, and to see to it *at once* that the necessary steps are taken to secure the fulfilment of their desire. Let no one imagine that I am seeking to be made the depositary of such a trust. That is a matter for the testator to consider. But, whatever his decision as to the best manner of safeguarding his bequest, he should *act promptly*. It would be unwise to establish by will a fund for the avowed purpose of aiding Anarchism or abolishing government. Such a will might be broken in the courts. But no objection could be made to a trust fund to be used in teaching and helping to realize equal liberty, and an Anarchistic interpretation of these words could be secured by naming as trustees three persons known to the testator to be plumb-line Anarchists, and giving them power to fill any vacancy in the trusteeship.

A word to the wise is sufficient. With even moderate means at its disposal the cause of Anarchism would develop wonderfully. Will it ever find its millionaire? T.

Single Taxers and Their Plans.

In the last issue of Liberty Mr. Bolton Hall expressed the opinion that I am increasingly worried as to the Single Tax, basing his judgment on the amount of space that I give to its consideration. These Single Taxers are curious creatures, and deuced hard to satisfy. If I don't notice them, they charge me with all sorts of unfairness and a disposition to wilfully ignore the truth. A Minnesota Single Tax organ has made this charge within a month. On the other hand, if I consider them at length, they sneer that I am worried about them.

Well, Mr. Hall, you are right. I *am* worried as to the Single Tax,—not "increasingly," but worried to the extent that I have been ever since "Progress and Poverty" made its appearance. Whenever an intelligent man announces a purpose to tyrannize by force over peaceable folk, it worries me. And it especially worries me when a dishonest man like Henry George uses the pull of hypocritical piety, and an honest man like G. F. Stephens uses the pull of high moral appeal, to induce others to join them in their criminal effort to forcibly take from men the products of their labor. Every form of authority worries me, every *attempt* at authority worries me. State Socialism worries me, Prohibition worries me, Comstockism worries me, the custom houses worry me, the banking monopoly worries me, landlordism worries me, and the Single Tax worries me. Do you suppose for a moment, Mr. Hall, that, if these things did not worry me, I should be publishing Liberty? Why, my good sir, I am bending all my energies to the thwarting of you and all others who propose, from whatever sincere and generous motives, to enforce their will upon non-invasive people. You worry me; indeed you do. I wish most heartily that you would let me and other peaceable people alone, abandon your menacing attitude toward our property, and quit worrying us, so that we might go about our business.

So much for the charge of worry, which Mr. Hall used as an introduction to a complaint against me for printing, and against Mr. Yarros for writing, an article containing the following passages: (1) "Wherever it is profitable to improve land, it is generally improved without the compulsion of the Single Tax"; (2) "How would the Single Tax help labor in England, Scotland, Ireland, Germany, Italy, and France? There is no land speculation in those countries worth mentioning." With Mr. Hall's objections to these passages I do not propose to deal elaborately; perhaps Mr. Yarros will do so later. But, in vindication of myself, I may say that to point out vacant lots does not overthrow Mr. Yarros's statement that *generally* that land is improved which it is profitable to improve, and that to point to instances of land speculation in European countries does not overthrow Mr. Yarros's other statement that land speculation in Europe is so much less frequent than in newer countries that it is not worth mentioning. The comparative and qualified statements of Mr. Yarros are construed by Mr. Hall into positive and sweeping ones, and then criticised as such. Mr. Yarros's claims amount simply to this,—that land speculation is an overrated evil even in this country, and that in older countries, where the land question is much more serious than here, speculation in land is so small an element in the problem that it may be neglected. Mr. Hall's surprise that I should print such statements is paralleled by my surprise at his hasty and careless reading of them.

It appears further from Mr. Hall's letter that the Single Taxers propose first to capture Delaware, and then to capture the Anarchists. Like the theatrical manager who prefers to test his new play in a country town before making a venture in the city, the Single Taxers will begin by "trying it on a dog." If they succeed with the dog, then they will accept our challenge. Our chances for a fight would be very bad, were it not that the dog, instead of giving bark for bark, is snapping at the Single Taxers' heels. If Delaware continues to send Single Taxers to the lock-up, there is a bare chance that Delaware will be captured through its own stupidity, and then the Anarchists' innings will begin. In view of Mr. Hall's honest admission that the Single Taxers are less intelligent than the Anarchists, the promised attempt of the less to swallow the greater is indicative of more valor than discretion. It is one thing for the less to worry the greater; it is quite another to swallow it. T.

Newspaper reporters and correspondents have an eye for the picturesque and sensational, and their most graphic descriptions have to be taken with considerable salt. The Milwaukee boycott, instituted by the street-car strikers, has been described as the most thorough, effective, and keen ever known in the United States. All business men and professional men were said to have joined it, through either fear or sympathy. The stories that have been told of the spread and operation of the boycott are simply marvellous. Of course, the press, with its usual stupidity, has been denouncing the boycott as un-American and vicious, and calling upon the law to put an end to it. It has been contradicting itself with the most amusing unconsciousness. One sentence would say that the entire city was involved, and that the population was so friendly to the strikers that it was actually enthusiastic over the great work of the boycott and eager to do its utmost to make it a memorable success. The next sentence would say that the whole city is held by the throat by the thousand strikers, and that nothing but terrorism forces the general public to obey the mandate of the malicious conspirators. As if a thousand strikers could compel, by any threats whatever, a city like Milwaukee to maintain a boycott unparalleled in its completeness and effectiveness! It is idle to expect the ordinary newspaper scribbler to reason logically about boycotting, when even judges and lawyers assert that it is as criminal as any malicious conspiracy to injure an individual by aggressive acts.

There is considerable talk in England about the demoralization of the Liberal party. The Tories pronounce it dead, because it has no recognized leaders and no well-defined principles. But how about their own party? The possession of the offices gives them the sole advantage they have over the Liberals. Their foreign policy is absolutely discredited, while their domestic programme is nothing but an effort to hold the farmer and labor vote by "reform" legislation of a collectivist character. What large, inspiring issue is there to-day in English politics? The real struggle is between the collectivists and the individualists, but neither of the old parties is in condition to take an active part in it.

The death of Dr. M. E. Lazarus, whose numerous articles over the signature of "Edgeworth" will be remembered by readers of Liberty's earlier volumes, removes a very remarkable man, and ends an almost wasted life. Had he not been so crazed with suspicion that it was impossible for him to have the slightest confidence in any human being, his marvellous intelligence and attainments might have given him great influence as a political and economic teacher. As it was, he died, so to speak, in the desert, where he had relapsed into a condition bordering on barbarism.

The two letters from Alexander Horr attacking occupancy and use as a basis of land tenure, printed on another page, have been in this office some time. They were not sent together, but it has been my intention to print them together and answer them in a single article. Pressure of other matter compels me to postpone my answer till the next issue.

Mr. Tandy's "Voluntary Socialism."

It seems incredible to one who sits as I am sitting that there should be a "social question" agitating the minds of men not three degrees away on the surface of the globe.

I am sitting in a hunting-cabin close to the shore of an Adirondack lake. My right hand is roasted by a big wood-fire in a stone-chimney; my left is chilled by the damp air from the open door. It is necessary that the door should stay open, for the fireplace smokes, and, if the door were shut, the room would be uninhabitable; as it is, it makes the eyes smart so that writing is difficult.

We have just had a visit from a neighbor, the only neighbor within two miles, a typical Uncle Sam with hollow cheeks, aquiline nose, and goatee beard. He came to greet our arrival,—for we had known him in the past years,—and to tell us how his twenty-year-old son had just got a job at twenty dollars a month and board, "and a pile o' money that is, yes, a pile o' money." As he sat "visiting," mingling his very deliberate remarks with strangely incongruous bursts of rural laughter his daughter, about seventeen, strolled diffidently in, she too to welcome us. "She had "hired out" in a town twenty miles away, was at home for a day or two only, and would go again, for months at a time, to her kitchen.

But what has all this to do with Mr. Tandy's book ?

This,—that it brings home to my mind most forcibly the general sentiment that I felt after reading it.

It is a difficult matter to criticise such a book. In general, it is a good—a very good—solution of the problem. The problem is this: to present a few large, new, broad ideas, constituting an organic group, to an audience which, if it grasp them at all, is sure to resort to questionings of the most minute details.

The danger is that the perspective will be lost,—that, in the attempt to bring out the small objects in the distance, the larger grouping of the foreground will be obscured.

If the book had been intended for a tract to awaken thought chiefly, it is to be feared that such would have been the effect; but, as it is probably addressed to those who are already awake and have, perhaps, already formed other opinions, and who therefore will read with a critical, not a docile, mind, the elaboration of the background was doubtless unavoidable.

The subjects of land, money, currency, special privileges, government, egoism, and the allied topics familiar to the readers of Liberty are taken up, one by one, and are treated in a very clear and satisfactory way, the only general fault that I could find being, as I have said, that the sense of the proportionate importance of the topics is not quite as well preserved as might be wished.

Nevertheless the book is an admirable one for bringing the idea of freedom to the unconverted mind.

The important question of a money-standard Mr. Tandy—very wisely, I think—avoids, urging that only under freedom can the best standard be determined by experiment. Theoretically, no doubt, all measures of value continually fluctuate, as do all measures of other things; the main difference is that in measures of length, for instance, the conditions are so simple that we can easily prescribe them, and say that a certain brass rod, at a certain temperature, and with certain barometrical and electrical conditions, shall be a yard; while, in measures of value, the conditions of production, invention, demand, distribution, and so on, are so various, so complicated, that we cannot prescribe just the state of affairs under which any given commodity shall be taken as a measure. Yet withal such a combination of values as shall more closely approach an unvarying value would be as truly material as the combined brass and iron rods with which the most perfect pendulums are constructed.

But this is aside: the main point which I should like to see worked up a little more in the next edition is the very important fact, in connection with evolution and the survival of the fittest, that with the beginning of society, properly so called, the intense competition of individual with individual, permitting the survival of but one perfect type, ceases; and the possibility begins of several different types surviving and prospering better than could a single type alone; so that the strong man will then be better off for the weak man and the weak for the strong, the clever for the stupid and the stupid for the clever. This, indeed, is what society means. As long as all the beasts of a community do the same thing, we call it a herd, not a society; but, when some ants are fighters, some workers, and some have still other functions, we recognize the true society.

So with primitive man. While all are hunters or fishers, the social development is least. When the lame man becomes an arrow-maker, society takes a step in development.

The highest society is that in which there is the greatest number of functions, requiring the greatest variety of types of man to fulfil them, and the least possible sacrifice of life for lack of a suitable function.

That is one reason why the military rule of the past is felt to be incompatible with the further differentiation of an industrial development.

In such a society, moreover, difference of capacity and corresponding difference of function imply, not greatly varying, but substantially equal, rewards to labor. Upon this Proudhon dwells, and to satisfy this instinct the Communist-Anarchists insist upon putting equality before liberty; not seeing, as the men of 1793 saw, that equality follows liberty.

And this brings me back to where I started with the old backwoods farmer and his daughter. Equality follows liberty, and fraternity follows equality.

Here, where the oppressions that deny liberty are least felt, men are substantially equal. The "hiring-out" girl may not be relegated to the kitchen, and expected to stand while her employer lectures her. She, too, is a man and brother; she will come in and expect a chair to be offered, and a grasp of the hand and a warm word. You may hire her services, but not her subserviency. Her brother, at twenty dollars a month, though he esteems it "a pile o' money," is not to be clad in rows of brass buttons, or expected to make a dash at his hat with his forefinger every time he speaks to you. He would starve first.

And here the houses stand unlocked, but no depredators trespass. An unoccupied house may be used by a belated traveller, but everything is safe in his hand.

People talk of the impossibility of such an Arcadian state for hundreds of years, forgetting that through the greater part of the country it exists now.

So strongly does the desire for fraternity appeal to the hearts of men that it seems to me most important, however clearly and coldly we preach liberty, that we should never forget that, after all, it is but a means to an end, and that it is to gratify our desires for fraternity and equality that we desire liberty.

John Beverley Robinson.

Rights in the Land.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The discussion of the land question carried on some time ago by you and Mr. Yarros is, to say the least, interesting to one up a tree. Still, I cannot see that either you or Mr. Yarros has disposed of the question as to whether men have an equal right to the use of the earth, either from your point of view as a matter of expediency, or from Mr. Yarros's position of absolute ethics.

In No. 307 of Liberty you say: "The contract to observe and enforce equal freedom is, in Liberty's eyes, simply an expedient adopted in consequence of the discovery that such observance and enforcement is the best, nay, the only means by which men can *steadily* and *securely* and *harmoniously* avail themselves of the *highest advantages* of life." [Italics mine.]

Your purpose was, as I understand, to show (1) that the equal right to the use of the earth is a corollary of the law of equal freedom; and (2) that the principle of equal freedom is not a law at all. You have proven to my entire satisfaction the second proposition; but that does not dispose of the question of the equal right to the use of the earth. If it is found expedient to enforce equal rights in other things, why not in the matter of land ? Without the right to use land, the enforcement of equal liberty in all other matters would be worse than mere patchwork; it would be the enslavement of the masses of the people in perpetuity. They could not emancipate themselves as long as they recognized the spurious rights of land-owners.

My contention is not vitiated by your disclaimer that "in special cases and under abnormal circumstances" liberty may be disregarded without invalidating the truth of the general principle, for you do not claim that the question of land tenure is "special" or "abnormal." Under the Single Tax *régime* a few unimportant cases might have to be considered as special or even abnormal, but this would occur in most other departments of societary functions.

If the foregoing reasoning is correct, there is no room for the "occupancy-and-use" theory, whatever that may mean. I have often seen the phrase in Liberty, but it was usually used in so loose a way that in my opinion it has not risen to the dignity of respectable empiricism. I have never seen an explanation, or even a definition, of "use and occupancy" in regard to land. It has always seemed to me one of those pleasantly indefinite magical wands, with which inconvenient difficulties are disposed of with a wave of the pen. Liberty would oblige a large contingent by discussing the question fully.

Now a word in regard to the statement of Mr. Yarros in No. 310 that he is "free to admit that the taxation of economic rent for general public ends, if *voluntarily agreed to*, would be a more perfect arrangement in some respects, but the use of force to bring it about would be extremely unwise." This is not quite clear; it may mean the use of force in the initiation of the Single Tax, or in "special" and "abnormal" cases. I take it to refer to the latter. The manner of determining what the economic rent amounts to is purely voluntary, or what amounts to the same thing—automatic. If equal rights to the use of the earth be granted (whether from principle or laws cuts no figure), then all men have a right to collect rent from those who use better than free land, because *each individual would collect such rent himself*, if he had the power; failing in this, a contract is entered into, tacitly or formally, for the purpose of collecting rent. There is no more difficulty in forming a contract like this than one to maintain "occupancy and use," for the evident reason that a decided minority would hold the most valuable land under the "occupancy-and-use" land tenure, which is at best only a second-cousin remove from the eternal cry of restricting "aliens" from holding land.

Alex. Horr.

Systems of Land Tenure.

To the Editor of Liberty:

The mere fact that there exists a land question may be taken as *prima facie* evidence that the prevailing system of private ownership of land, based on fraud or conquest, is to be rejected. Four systems of land tenure are advocated with more or less vigor:

(*a*) Cultivation in common, with division of product.

(*b*) Periodical division of land.

(*c*) Occupancy and use,—the system Liberty champions.

(*d*) Private possession, subject to a tax sufficient to absorb economic rent.

The objections to theories (*a*) and (*b*), in an advanced state of civilization under conditions of freedom, are so obvious that it would be a waste of time to recount them. The two systems that deserve the most careful consideration are the "occupancy-and-use" theory and the "Single Tax" theory.

I need not dwell on the difficulties involved in maintaining the most precarious form of occupancy and use. Its most able advocates fully appreciate these objections, and they rest their hopes on the uncertain and dilatory decisions of juries selected from the registered, or tax-paying, inhabitants of the community. If we keep in mind that it is "feeling" that determines the destinies of the human race, the question arises: will not the decisions of juries be determined mainly, if not wholly, by the tax-paying class. If such should be the case, the proposition resolves itself into a question of taxation: who will pay the taxes, when the revenues of the "administration" depend on voluntary contributions ?

Individuals will locate where they think they can get the most advantages with the least effort; which is only a particular application of the general law that "man will seek to satisfy his desires with the least exertion." Each land-owner will do all he can to induce people to live on his land. Whatever will increase the benefits obtainable in any location will draw more people, and each addition of population will increase the desirability of the locality. The land

that possesses the greatest advantages in fertility, richness in minerals, proximity to harbors, or any other decided superiority would deserve and obtain the largest amount of improvement. It is evident that none but land-owners could be induced to pay taxes, *for all the benefits from the proper expenditure of such taxes would go to increase land values.* Non-land-owning individuals may occasionally insist on paying taxes, but this would only add that much to their net expenses, and such policy would be abandoned sooner or later, for their non-tax-paying competitors would have that much advantage in the open market. Some may hastily decide that, if the above reasoning is correct, voluntary taxation would result in the application of the Single Tax without a resort to force. At first sight it does look like the "Single Tax limited," but that the resemblance is illusory may be noticed by observing this essential difference: the "Single Taxer limited," while not insisting, is prepared at all times to take a larger and larger portion of economic rent as occasion arises. In fact, his difficulty consists in being eternally tormented by the fear that by some chance he may take more than the actual economic rent. Of course the fear is absurd, when the effect of competition is taken into consideration. As civilization advances; as the sciences, the arts, and inventions more fully develop; as skill, enterprise, and ability become more general,—so will the value of land increase and more or less keep pace with this advance. Under "occupancy and use" all these advantages would go to land-owners and land-owners only. The correctness of the essentials of the foregoing reasoning will hardly be questioned; they may be considered as household truisms; but, if they are granted, we are forced to the surprising, yet logical, conclusion that the laborer, under the *régime* of "occupancy and use," instead of being secured in the control of "self and the results of self-exertion," would obtain a smaller and smaller portion of his product as he became more skilful and more enterprising, and as he is born in a more advanced state of civilization.

Now that I have shown that "occupancy and use" as a system of land tenure under conditions of freedom is untenable, it may be worth while to consider the only objection, urged with any force, against the Single Tax from a libertarian standpoint.

If all men are entitled to equal freedom, then all men are entitled to equal freedom to use the earth; it is physically impossible for each man to occupy the whole globe at the same time. But all men's equal freedom may be maintained by each man collecting rent from those that occupy valuable land. Those that occupy valuable land have the option of paying rent or occupying valueless sites; a gold mine is discovered under the shanty of one of these moving spirits; *he has to pay rent or vacate again.* The libertarian will probably enter a demurrer that he is not responsible for the existence of gold beneath his habitation, and why should he be compelled to incommode himself? The answer is simple and complete. Equal freedom is to be maintained, or not. If the choice is made for equal freedom, then changes due to social growth which are just as inevitable as any other phenomena of nature must be submitted to. He who enjoys the advantage of equal freedom is secured in his "freedom to control self and the results of self-exertion," but is not protected from the inevitable effects of the operations of nature.

Alex. Horr.

Anarchist Letter-Writing Corps.

The Secretary wants every reader of Liberty to send in his name for enrolment. Those who do so thereby pledge themselves to write, when possible, a letter every fortnight, on Anarchism or kindred subjects, to the "target" assigned in Liberty for that fortnight, and to notify the secretary promptly in case of any failure to write to a target (which it is hoped will not often occur), or in case of temporary or permanent withdrawal from the work of the Corps. All, whether members or not, are asked to lose no opportunity of informing the secretary of suitable targets. Address, Stephen T. Byington, East Hardwick, Vt.

Please note change of secretary's address.

Members should remember that they are in no way whatever bound to follow my directions in writing to targets. I usually give brief suggestions of possible lines of attack, because I have been requested to do so in order to make members' work easier. But no member is in any case bound to pay any attention to these hints. On the contrary, if ideas for the letter have suggested themselves to you independently of my advice, these will probably be the best material for your letter. Neither are you bound to write on the particular subject for the sake of which I named that target—not even when I especially request that letters be confined to a given subject; though, of course, when I make such a request, I advise you to conform to it, unless your reasons for not doing so are very strong.

When I asked members to write commendatory reviews of "Mutual Banking" and send them to Comrade Cohen to be used in helping the sale of that book, one member, who thought the book had too many mistakes, sent a review pointing out its faults. In so doing he was perfectly conforming to his obligations as a Corps member. There will be a difference of opinion as to whether he was putting his ink and paper to as wise a use as if he had written differently, but there can be no doubt that he was keeping the Corps pledge. He might also have kept it by letting "Mutual Banking" alone, and sending Cohen a letter on the land question to be transmitted to one of Cohen's labor papers.

The questions on what subject you are to write, and from what standpoint you are to discuss that subject, are left entirely to your own discretion. Consider the adaptability of the subject to yourself and to the target's needs as far as possible; consider also the desirability of having all letters follow the same line of attack in certain cases, while in others it may be equally desirable that they follow different lines; but don't feel that you are bound to write what I tell you to.

Two special cautions. Don't copy my words, if you can help it; for some other man will be doing the same, and then the target will get two letters expressing the same ideas in the same words, and will understand they are inspired from the same source. We want our letters generally to seem independent of each other. And, when I give a large number of different suggestions, don't try to get them all into your letter; I mean you to pick out and use what suits you best among them. In particular, it is lunacy to try to get in too many points where short letters are especially wanted.

Target, section A.—Thrice-a-Week edition of "World," New York city, prints the following invitation:

> Now that the presidential campaign is about to begin and the situation is one of unusual complications, the Thrice-a-Week "World" is willing to receive and print short letters from the people concerning prevailing political conditions and what they think to be the proper remedies for the troubles that exist. These letters must be short, to the point, and free from abuse of anybody or anything. A man who cannot argue temperately will not be allowed to argue at all in our columns.
>
> It does not matter to us what may be the politics or opinions of the writer. He may be Republican or Democrat, free silver or gold standard, high tariff or low tariff, we will try to give him space so long as he writes decently and sensibly. If he wants to attack any particular policy of the "World," he is welcome to do so. Our object is to secure a full and fair discussion by all sides, and we shall make no comment of our own upon the letters.
>
> The letters will be published in our Friday issues under the title of "Letters from the People." Address your letters to "Editor the Thrice-a-Week 'World,' Pulitzer building, New York City, N. Y."

It will probably be necessary to give your letters some reference to the political campaign. You can do this by pointing out the true principles of the money question or any other issue of the campaign, or by opposing political action as a means of getting relief.

Section B.—"Texas State Labor Journal," Dallas, Tex., lately printed an article on "The Minimum of Authority," with the following editorial note:

> The following article has been received without date or signature. On account of its merit, and because of the scarcity of arguments on that side of the question, we depart from our usual rule of requiring signatures, and publish the article.

Tell what is involved in "the minimum of authority," according to your ideas, and what it is good for.

Stephen T. Byington.

The Fountaineer.

[Paul Degouy in La Justice.]

I do not know whether this is exactly the title by which to designate the worthy man who, equipped with hose and sprinkler, waters our streets. But the name is of little consequence. It is of a fountaineer that I am to speak, if you will permit me.

Day before yesterday I was going through the Champs-Elysées between two showers. You know the sort of weather that we have been having for a week. It rains five or six times a day, on an average. Judge of my astonishment at seeing a fountaineer watering the road. I hardly need say that there was no dust. Nor was there even any mud. In either case the watering would have been explicable. But day before yesterday the wooden pavement, copiously washed by the preceding shower, was as clean as a new penny. One could have eaten off it.

I had a great desire to ask the too zealous fountaineer for an explanation, but I feared that my request would be ill received. But a hundred yards further on I came upon one of his comrades who had abandoned his sprinkler for his broom, and was sweeping dead leaves into the gutter.

"So you are sweeping?" I said to this man. "But how is it that your comrade yonder is watering the road? It rained only five minutes ago. In five minutes it will rain again. Why waste water in such weather?"

"It is better to water than to be fined a franc, Monsieur."

"What! You would be fined, if you did not water on a day like this?"

"It is as I tell you, Monsieur. They want water. It won't do to oppose them. They want water."

"They! Who?"

"The overseer, the superintendent, the engineers, the city, and what not."

"But, if the overseer were here, he himself would tell you not to water."

"Not so sure. For the superintendent wants the streets watered."

"But the superintendent, if he were here" . . .

"He would tell you that the engineer wants the streets watered."

"Then there is no one over you who is in a position to say: 'To-day the streets are not to be watered'?"

"No one. I tell you that they want water. I was watering just now, myself. It was useless. The pavement does not 'smoke.' It has been raining for a week. But I don't intend to be fined. They want water. They want water."

There was nothing for me to do but to go away. I started off in a dreamy mood, gradually amplifying this little anecdote until, when I reached the Arc de Triomphe and turned toward the Champs-Elysées doubly watered by the skies and our fountaineers, the procedure of the entire French administration had passed through my head for the hundredth time. This humble employee of the city, trembling at the idea of a fine; having neither the right or perhaps even the desire to take any initiative whatsoever; feeling the weight upon him of a hierarchy of superiors, slaves, like himself, of a countersign given once for all; but feeling also at ease behind this protective countersign and in a position to say to the public: "What do I care for you? Besides, I am not to blame; it is THEY!"—this man seemed to me a sort of personification of officialism.

Go to the bottom of all the abuses pointed out, whether it be some amusing administrative *chinoiserie*, or some lamentable routine that imperils the country's interests, and you will find again the case of my fountaineer. Every official in France, with rare exceptions, does his duty strictly. And, doing this, he is not even conscious, as a general thing, that he is collaborating, more or less, in some absurdity or in some formidable error. The development of his critical sense—if he has any—is inversely proportional to the severity of the discipline, and his spirit of initiative—if he has any—is the more quickly stifled from the fact that it is never exercised. And as he sees around him and over him the terror that the smallest responsibility inspires, he too takes refuge in his countersign as in a place of asylum and rest.

I am greatly astonished that the fountaineer of whom I have just spoken admitted that it was useless,

day before yesterday, to water the Champs-Elysées. I could point to high officials in the department of bridges and roads who worship the rules much more devoutly. Having once had occasion to explain in detail that it took several weeks, twelve separate statements, and thirty signatures to pay a franc and a half to a workman for services required by a road-laborer who had found himself in circumstances of exceptional embarrassment, I received from a dignitary connected with the department of bridges and roads a letter in which he endeavored to explain to me that all had proceeded in the best way in the world, and that it would be a pity were such things to proceed otherwise.

I have a drawer full of su-h stories. Some have been told already. The others will come in good time. Always the same complications resulting from excessive centralization and the constant effort to distribute the smallest responsibility by a system of infinite gradation. In the forestry department, for instance, when a storm has damaged the roof of a guard's house, no less a person than the minister of agriculture can authorize the replacing of the tiles. Does it astonish you, then, that they hesitate to accord to a fountaineer the right to not open a hydrant? And the most distressing feature of the matter is that I was once told by a protector of the forests, who ought to consider it a sort of insult that he is not permitted to decide upon a matter of petty repairs, that he was delighted to be "covered" in these things by his minister.

With such a love of centralization on the part of the minister and such a horror of responsibility on the part of his subordinates, how can you expect to find any one—fountaineer, overseer, superintendent, engineer, director of public works—to decide that the Champs-Elysées shall not be watered between two showers?